

Who cares in Europe? Spastics News surveys the EEC

FIVE PER CENT of the population of Europe are disabled to the point of needing some form of help with their handicap. How these millions fare — particularly in the Common Market countries — is becoming a topic of ever-increasing concern. On one hand, certain nations have set wondrous examples for less enlightened to

follow; on the other, tales of poor provision continue to reach the ears of international pressure groups, still powerless to do much about it.

When the Council of Europe published four years ago from Strasbourg its proposed legislation on the rehabilitation and employment of the disabled, it spoke firmly of all governments'

duty 'to provide a normal place in society for disabled persons, within their limitations, whatever may be the cause of their disability, and therefore to provide for and encourage their functional and occupational rehabilitation.'

How many of the EEC countries have taken the hint? In a special investigation, Spastics News discovers the truth...

COMMON MARKET — BUT NO EQUALITY FOR DISABLED



INCREASING numbers of handicapped citizens of the EEC like to travel to see how their counterparts live and work in other Common Market countries. But it is often quite a struggle to see Europe — as this picture proves. It shows, too, that it is high time that all nine countries adopted a common policy on access for the disabled.

The photograph was taken for the Open University Students' Association during a study tour to Italy and demonstrates the difficulty of getting a wheelchair-bound tourist into his aircraft seat.

Says Valerie Saunders of the OUSA: 'One of the most traumatic experiences is the unloading and loading at Fiumicino Airport, particularly if it is raining. The very strong and willing Italian airport staff rarely speak English, and it is quite terrifying not to be able to tell them where or where not to hold, lift or touch.' With the best will in the world, she says, the lifters are

whacked out climbing, laden, up the steps, and the 'wriggling and heaving' that goes on to get the handicapped person into his aircraft seat usually means that there are 'bangs and bruises.' The answer, she says, is for a fork lift truck to hoist wheelchair and occupant up to the door of the aircraft so that he could be taken to his seat and then have the wheelchair stowed in the hold.

But in spite of the difficulties, handicapped Open University students find their study tours abroad both instructive and enjoyable.

No reason why ALL disabled people should not have the opportunity to travel just like their able-bodied fellow citizens. But they would like to do it with more dignity and there is no doubt that many Common Market transport administrators, be they concerned with airports, railway stations, or simple rural bus services, have a lot to learn about ease of access.

All nine EEC countries seem to believe they have done their duty for the disabled. All nine refer proudly enough to their respective achievements in the field of social service. But no observer could possibly claim a happy picture overall. They might well instead remark that hundreds of thousands of disabled European men, women and children are still — despite those brave words from Strasbourg — treated as second class citizens.

Comments like 'paternalistic,' 'patronising,' even 'antediluvian' have reached my own ears during this investigation. Yet here it must be added that the United Kingdom did not come in for much criticism: it stood up quite well on several fundamental issues. Britain is not, however, the country into which folk said they would choose to be born if they knew they were faced with a lifetime's experience as, say, a wheelchair spastic. Where would they elect for home? Holland, little land of dykes and daring social commitment.

Holland

In Holland you find a profound attitude among the people of acceptance and awareness of the disabled. Every train, for instance, has its wide entrance for wheelchairs, and there are facilities to travel the length and breadth of the country, with ramps an integral part of every station. The Netherlands Railways gives free passes to escorts if they are needed.

Nearly 9,000 people have a popular little car on loan—a Daf, Simca or VW Beetle, perhaps—and a further 14,000 a gener-

Report by Rosemary March

ous allowance to run their own vehicles. Eighty thousand car owners are exempted from paying car tax because of their handicap. Mobility assistance in Holland, however, is by no means its star attraction.

The real reason why so many have said they liked what Holland has to offer is its concentrated effort to meet and match the needs and abilities of its disabled, with assistance and opportunities at every level. The Dutch government urges handicapped men and women out to work wherever possible, integrates them, and tries (at considerable expense) to make them feel worthwhile, productive members of the community.

Denmark

That same attitude of responsible concern shows up in Denmark, too. It has some sophisticated services—well-financed home provision, for example—and particularly earns high marks by international observers for its excellent understanding of the quality-of-life aspect to its programme for this minority group. One of the first nations evidently to be realistic about the future, with its emphasis on much more leisure and fulfilment outside employment, wide provision has been made by the Danes for young handicapped people. Youth 'handicamps,' community projects, travel exchange trips, are all designed to give the upcoming generation of disabled a sense of identity and purpose.

Handicapped children in Denmark are thoughtfully taken into account with mobility assistance: means-tested loans (varying according to a consideration of need and, of course, income) are offered to their parents. Help comes also

with purchase tax exemption, driving tuition and the annual weight tax in that country. All this applies equally to adult disabled; and, if they are the drivers, to car conversion.

Eire

Although the Irish Republic has known darker days (shadows may linger in some rural districts, where a spastic relative could still be hidden in the back parlour), recent improvements in legislation have made the situation brighter. The government appears to be making big steps at last to improve the position of Ireland's handicapped, and to encourage the public to acknowledge their rightful place. It

gives a cash grant towards the cost of a car, or adaptations; petrol is duty free; drivers pay no Vehicle Excise Duty or VAT on car purchase.

Weekly pensions are paid for disability assessment from 20 per cent upwards (maximum £17.40); but there are supplementary benefits on hand, such as unemployment benefit (top personal rate is £12.45), free bus and rail travel with accompanying husband or wife, an electricity allowance, free television licence, home assistance in some cases—and perhaps help with fire fuel.

The Irish Wheelchair Association, in particular, has long been pressuring the country for a less primitive attitude. It seems now that their agitation is finally paying off.

Continued on Page 6

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A film we all want to see

THAMES Television are hoping that a documentary screened last month in part of their 'Get Out and Push' series will be repeated and also screened by the rest of the country's independent networks. The film tells the story of Erling Stordahl, a Norwegian, who despite being blind, not only set up a health and sports centre for the physically disabled in Norway, but was instrumental in setting up a similar centre in the USA.

The Centre is shown with its many and varied activities from the familiar such as riding and swimming to the unexpected such as ski-running and tandem cycling. Erling, blind since boyhood, early appreciated the need of the physically disabled for exercise.

He and his wife have no children of their own, instead they care for their nephew, a spastic who had been placed in an institution. Erling says: 'He has been with us for 22 years and he has given more to us in that time than we have given to him.'

The Centre is open throughout the year and 'clients' as Erling calls them, stay for as long as a month. It is situated in a scenic valley where Erling grew up and where, if he had not been blind, he would have followed family tradition and become a farmer.

Instead he has turned a crippling disability to the advantage of himself and hundreds of others suffering from some form of physical handicap.

Help them play at Lincoln

A PLAYGROUP for handicapped children is opening at the Thomas Cooper Hall, Lincoln. The organiser is Mrs Paula Herridge, of 11 Sausthorpe Street, Lincoln, whose two-year-old daughter, Louisa, is spastic.

Now Mrs Herridge is appealing for trained playgroup leaders and volunteer helpers so that the children can enjoy the playgroup on a "One-to-One" basis.

They came to the rescue



MIKE Goodes and Les Creasey, co-founders of 'Autotrend,' who came to the rescue of disabled drivers who found themselves forced off the road simply because there was no authorised repairer of invalid cars in the Medway Towns area of Kent.

Disabled drivers were 'desperate'

FOR nearly six months the disabled drivers of invalid cars in the Medway Towns of Kent where without an approved repairer. If their vehicles broke down they were dependent upon garages as far apart as Tunbridge Wells, Sidcup and Whitstable.

In the end some drivers with breakdown problems started ringing the home phone number of a mechanic who had worked for the company that went out of business, to help them out.

Mike Goodes found he was being called out even at the weekends, so in June, with partner Les Creasey, he opened up 'Autotrend' specifically to

provide a service for the by now desperate disabled drivers of the Medway Towns.

It took him just three weeks from thinking of the idea to decorating out newly-found premises in Beacon Road, Chatham. At first there was an enormous flood of work, starting with vehicles that had been unattended since the previous February and bringing the fleet of loan vehicles up to scratch.

But having fulfilled a need Mike and Les suddenly discovered that drivers were not bringing in their cars for the essential regular servicing.

'The vehicles must be serviced every four months or 1,500 miles, which we can do while the client waits, or given a major service where we virtually re-build the vehicle every 12 months or 12,000 miles.

Mike and Les, with their two wives who are also directors of Autotrend, seriously considered closing down, when the swing back started—it

seemed the only reason business had been slack was the good weather.

'Apparently drivers had been reluctant to be without their cars while the sun shone. But business is ticking over so well now that as long as we can get in the Ministry spares we'll stay in business,' says Mike.

Sex problems explored

A NEW series of eight leaflets has been published by the Committee on Sexual Problems of the Disabled (SPOD). Each leaflet looks at a specific group of problems and offers solutions and is designed for reading by both the handicapped and their families.

SPOD's aim is to provide factual information and practical advice so that the disabled can overcome or reduce any problem of a sexual nature that is troubling them.

The leaflets, either singly or in sets, are available from The Spastics Society's Family Services and Assessment Centre, Aids and Equipment Section, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1.

Scots raise funds the legal way...

FETTES College, the Scottish Public School in Edinburgh where Ian Fleming's super spy, James Bond, received his exclusive education, takes on quite another role this month.

It is the setting for a legal melodrama, devised and written by Appeals Officer Roy Learmouth, entitled 'The Elphinstone Emeralds.' And the cast as well as the title is studded with gems such as TV personality Ludovic Kennedy as narrator, while host for the night is Lord Birsay, Senior Senator of Scottish Law, and the vote of thanks will be given by the Earl of Mansfield, himself a barrister, one of whose ancestors as Lord High Chamberlain reworded the English legal system.

The parts of the lawyers will be acted out by Queen's Counsel and Sheriffs, and the case itself, revolving around the rightful ownership of an emerald necklace, a country house party, screams in the night, the theft of the jewels and their subsequent discovery are all the stuff of vintage Agatha Christie.

Author Roy Learmouth says: 'The case will be tried properly and seriously with senior

boys of Fettes acting as the jurors. At the same time I hope it will prove an entertaining and enjoyable evening.'

'The Case of the Elphinstone Emeralds' will be tried on September 23, and prior to the trial, between 7 pm and 7.30 pm, the 'jurors' will act as wine waiters at the reception. Tickets are £3, it is a 'black tie' affair and the proceeds will go to the Scottish Spastics appeal.

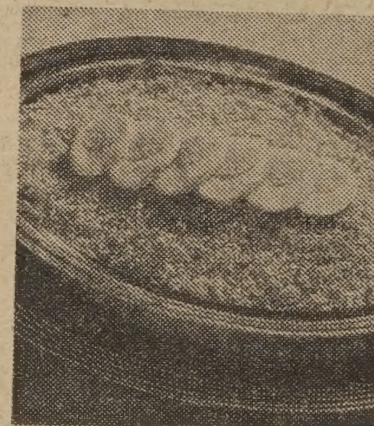
Mystery donor

HE is elderly, generous—and anonymous, the mystery man who nearly every year makes a gift of money to Wakes Hall, the residential centre run by The Stars Organisation for Spastics, near Colchester, Essex.

He has just donated £100 in £5 notes which makes over £300 in all over the years.

Mrs Monique Chapleo, wife of the centre's Warden, says: 'He is an elderly gentleman, and we are getting to know him a little, but he still insists on remaining anonymous. We respect his wish, and whoever he is, we are very grateful to him.'

September cookery



Savoury Charlotte (serves 4)

3oz fresh white breadcrumbs
1½ oz shredded suet
1½oz Cheddar cheese, finely grated
1oz home-produced butter
4 British eggs, hard-boiled and chopped

½lb mixed root vegetables, cooked and diced

4oz British or Ulster ham, chopped

3 salad onions, cut into small pieces and cooked for five minutes, then drained

1 teaspoon made mustard or 1 teaspoon mixed chopped fresh herbs

½ pint thick white sauce

Salt and pepper as required

Mix together breadcrumbs, suet and cheese; season well.

Put all the other ingredients, except the butter, into the white sauce. Lightly grease a fireproof dish. Place half the breadcrumb mixture into the dish, pour in the sauce mixture, then cover with the rest of the breadcrumbs. Dot top with butter. Bake at 350 deg F, Mark 4, for 30-40 minutes and serve with a seasonal green vegetable or salad.

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BATRIC electrically powered chair, 18 months old; excellent condition with waterproof apron, boot, spare inner tube and front and rear lights, for £300.—Apply Miss M. Gardner, Flat 33, Nailbourne Court, Lyminge, near Folkestone, Kent.

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Waldrons, Croydon, Surrey, or ring 01-681 0090.

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LIVERPOOL Spastics Fellowship needs two wooden chairs with arms. Contact Miss A. Angers, 2 Church Road, Liverpool 15.

SHAPE workshops. Improvisation, voice, clowning, dance/movement. A series of six workshops, given by Gina Levene, Frankie Armstrong, John Turnell and Natalie D'Arbeloff. Tuesday evenings starting September 27, 1977, 7.30 to 9.30 pm. For further information, call Shape 01-836 0487.

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SN Sep20

Refusing to believe: 'You can't do anything with subnormals'

Hospital experts succeed with Conductive Education

IN part it is due to pure chance that Gary can get his shoes and socks on and off, Maggie can stand with her feet flat on the floor, Janet can build towers of Lego blocks and Joy Evans has a Nursery Class to work with using the Conductive method of Education devised by Professor Andras Peto in Hungary.

Joy, a teacher at St Lawrence's School, Caterham, Surrey, explained: 'A Dutch physiotherapist was visiting St Lawrence's Hospital when a BBC TV programme showed

the Peto method in use at The Spastics Society's Ingfield Manor School. The physiotherapist was very impressed and wanted to go there. We'd always been told: 'You can't do anything with our kids because you can't do anything with subnormals.'

'Betty Budd, St Lawrence's Hospital Superintendent Physiotherapist and I did wonder if it would be the case. Then the Society's Consultant Physiotherapist, Esther Cotton, came and said she

would support us and Betty went to Ingfield Manor for four weeks just as an extra pair of helping hands to see the method work for herself. Exercises based on the Peto principles were tried out and then Betty was awarded a Churchill Scholarship and was able to visit the Peto Institute in Budapest and see Conductive Education at work first hand.

'I'd been picking Betty's brains and vice-versa about how best to help the child-



BETTY Budd, who, with Joy Evans, first had the belief that the Peto method COULD be made to work with the mentally handicapped cerebral palsied pupil, and so started the only Peto class of Conductive Education, outside those run by the Society in this country.

ren in my class, but basically I was just propping them up as best I could.'

The Peto method has changed all that with its integrated system of education, physiotherapy and speech therapy. Yet just as it was chance that led to St Lawrence's school trail-blazing as the first, outside Ingfield, to use the Peto method, so chance could have prevented it. The problem was the funding of the special equipment such as the plinths which are essential.



Although both Hospital and School were wholeheartedly in favour of Peto, the health and education authorities felt it was the responsibility of the other to pay up.

So Joy and Betty got on with the job themselves: 'We ran a jumble sale to raise the money, the woodwork teacher made a couple of plinths and local schools made the rest as part of their work projects... we got our plinths in six weeks.'

The Peto class consists 'basically' of eight. 'Basically' because Glyn came to watch and now tries to copy the group activities. He can swallow better, attempts to wipe his mouth with tissue and imitates the sounds the rest are making. 'And he obviously enjoys it all,' said Joy.

She has been at the School six years, after leaving teaching, to raise a family of seven. 'I came here thinking in terms of "Bright little mongols" and instead found a miscellaneous group with every sort of handicap, spastics, epileptics, all stuck in wheelchairs, and wheelchairs that were the wrong sort at that, in front of tables.

'The stuff on the walls with their names on' was mostly done by staff and a lot of time was taken up with gadgets. I spend the first three months without a clue as to what I was doing.'

The Peto method has brought all sorts of changes in five of the eight in the class—it has also brought a further development. 'I went on and on about how much we could do if only we could start earlier so at Easter, Mr Edward Clarke, the Headmaster, said "Right" and gave me a nursery class of five.'

Because of Betty's and Joy's endeavours with the first class,

ALL the joy of achievement is on Maggie's face as, encouraged by teacher's assistant Kate Bickerstaff, left, and teacher Judith Earl, she pulls herself to her feet using the classic Peto ladderback chair. As Maggie works to bring her head into the midline, her two helpers keep up a chorus of praise.

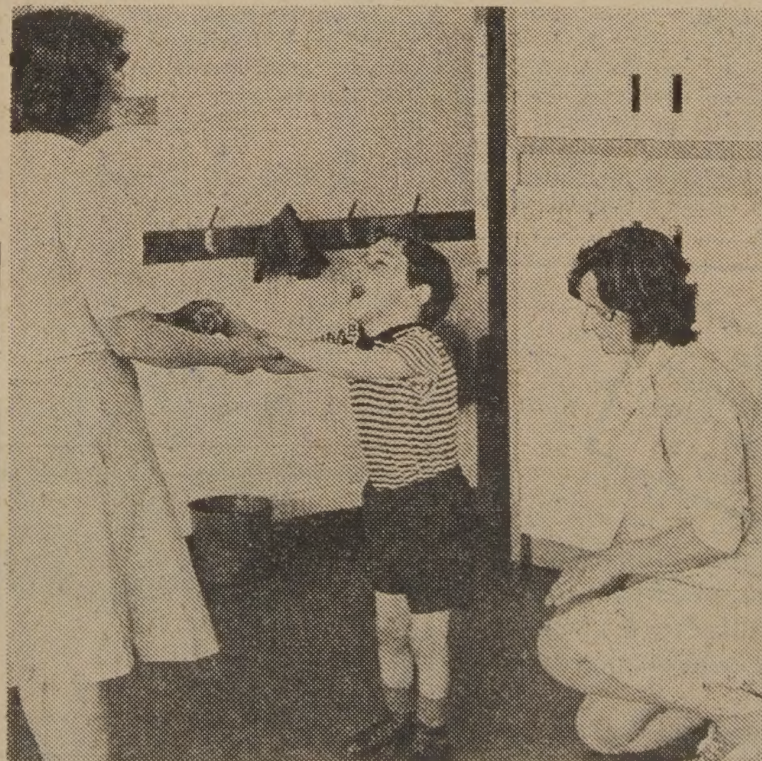
Continued on Page 4



JANET is a major fulfillment for Joy and Betty's optimism—for at 23 she could have been classed as too old for treatment. Janet's improvements have been both in speech and activity—holding on to her Peto plinth with her 'good' hand she is able to build up bricks with her 'bad' hand.



SAID Joy of Gary: 'Learning to take off his shoes and socks may seem such a little thing—but at one time his only physical capability was to wriggle on his tummy—so this really is a big improvement, it means such a lot.'



JOY and teacher's assistant Shirley Nelson with one of the nursery class, Lee, aged eight. Although the nursery class has just started Lee can already put his hands together when asked to as part of a teaching game.

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SN Sep2

Conductive Education at hospital school

Continued from Page 3

Maggie's parents visit frequently because they can now see their daughter actually achieving something. 'Maggie is very athetoid—she couldn't put her feet to the ground, her hands were up in the air all the time but she's got a great deal of determination. It's been a long, long, slow process but now she can get her feet flat on the floor and she's learning to walk.

'Janet, at 23, could put just two pieces of Lego on her board—we gave it to her to keep her occupied while we worked with the others. At 23 she is officially off the school register. Yet after four weeks she could not only fill the board till there was no room for more but started building. Proof that even at her age you can use Peto.

'We used to put Gary on the floor and see if he could

wriggle towards a sweet and reach for it with his good hand. He cried the first time we took him out of his wheelchair and sat him on a plinth. That was the extent of his physical activity.

'Now he not only takes off his shoes and socks—he can walk the relatively considerable distance to his ward. Janet's father wrote to the speech therapist congratulating her because she had made such an obvious improvement in speech—yet Janet hadn't had speech therapy for ages—it was the result of being in the Peto Class.'

Joy's class is now taken by Judith Evans, a qualified teacher who worked as Betty's Physiotherapy assistant. 'I sailed into the school because it was near home—I hadn't realised what it would be like. Now I don't think I'd go back to teaching in ordinary schools.'

Said Joy: 'It may not seem much but we notice each little improvement and in fact it is a big improvement. It's all helping them towards that bit more independence. We set them something to do to find out what they can't do—very often what gives one difficulty will prove difficult for them all. So the Group activities build up skills.' All available staff are roped in for the plinth sessions to ensure a ratio of two to one.

With the exception of one, all the class live at the Hospital and Joy and Betty would like to see the skills they teach in class carried through to the time that is spent in the wards. The school day lasts from 9.30 to 3.30—in class they may be able to take off their shoes or put on their pinafores prior to having lunch. Away from class the inevitable pressures of time on care staff generally means it is quicker to do such jobs for them—in the short term.

Of her nursery class of five Joy says: 'I'm very optimistic about this little lot.'

She would like to see the Peto method universally in use in the big sub-normality hospital patients' schools: 'Then something positive would be achieved instead of parents having to look on such schools as the last dumping ground!'

Liz Cook



MAGGIE, sitting on her Peto plinth built by a woodwork class. She can sit up straight and her family are so thrilled at how much response they now receive, they visit much more frequently.

Our proudest exporters



Workshops bring Arab money into Britain

A HOSPITAL in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates and a steel factory in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, are both using an internal relay system which spastics in Britain have, in part, helped to make. It was through John Bullock, manager of the Crewe Works Centre that the contract came about and that workers at his centre and the Buxton Centre did their bit to help the flow of Arab dollars into Britain.

Contract

'I had been a senior design engineer with D. D. Lamson, a firm producing what are called send-relay units. So I simply went to the manager and asked him if he'd got anything for us—they gave us about two sets of 30 components to manufacture, and assemble and as a result we got the contract for 128.

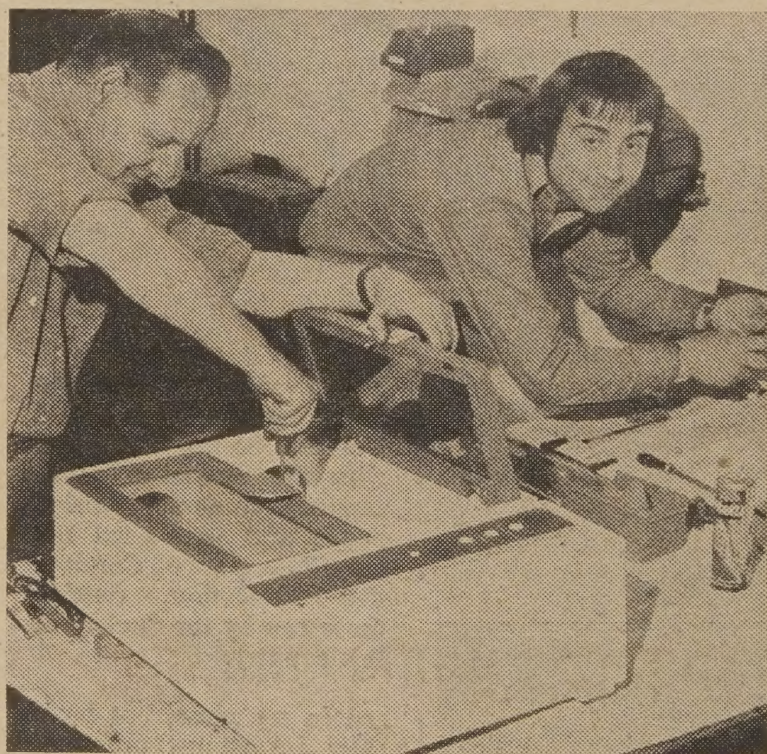
'Buxton came into the picture to help the work load along as did trainees at two other Society centres, the Lancaster, now closed, and the Chingford which had an essential lathe.

'What we made is known officially as the 1060 D. D. Lamson send-relay unit with incorporated electronic switch gear relays. They're used for sending items weighing up to 34lb within a building or from

THE exporters at work. Picture above shows the Buxton half of the work force that produced 128 relay units. Front are George Hopkins (left) and John Graham, workshop instructor, and left to right, Ray Stone, Terry Hudson, Bert Garlick, Walter and Emmett Roberts.

PICTURE below shows Ken Vickers and David Haighton in Crewe and District Spastics Society workshop getting down to their share of the export order to Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

Pictures by Buxton Advertiser and Crewe Chronicle.



one building to another at a speed of 25 mph. In the hospital in Dubai it will mean that samples of blood and tissue can be sent from the operating theatre to the pathology lab in sterile conditions in seconds, for analysis. While at the steel complex in Kuwait small samples of molten metal will be sent from the blast furnace to the laboratory the same way.'

Mr Bullock is still on the look out for more export business—he is hoping to line up orders from India and the Philippines.

Specs at home

THE consumer magazine 'Which?' has taken a look at spectacles offered by the National Health Service and among its recommendations is one that opticians should be paid a fee to visit the housebound, who wear glasses.

Pressure group for disabled passengers

HILARY Jones, of 16 Calder Court, Britannia Road, Surbiton, Surrey, has formed the National Disabled Passengers Association to cater for the needs of a section of the community which she strongly feels has been too often ignored. She is herself housebound and finds that the Mobility Allowance she receives means she can only get out once a month because of the high cost of car hire.

Her Association has three aims: to have the Mobility Allowance raised to a realistic level which will provide the severely disabled person with adequate mobility, secondly to discover the special mobility problems, social and financial of this group of people, and, thirdly, to bring these problems to the relevant Government Department for their attention and solution.

Hilary hopes that members of her Association will be invited to sit on leading committees looking into the mobility problems of the disabled and that Association members will focus the general public's attention on their problems. 'If the public is made aware of these problems, the disabled passenger is less likely to be overlooked again,' she said.

Membership forms are available from Hilary and the £1.50 subscription qualifies for two years' membership. Non-disabled people are welcome to join as associate members. The Association will publish a newsletter three times a year.

Parents learn how to make aids and toys

A SPECIALLY designed course for the parents of handicapped children who want to make or adapt toys and aids for them, starts on September 23 at Richmond-upon-Thames College, Egerton Road, Twickenham. No special technical skills are required and the classes are on Tuesday evenings from 7.00 pm to 9.30 pm.

Hand controls for standard motorised toys and train sets, adapted bikes and trikes, motorised go-karts and wheelchairs are just a few of the

course projects but every effort will be made to meet an individual child's requirements.

The course costs £3.80 and is also open to teachers, play-leaders and others involved with handicapped children.

Norwich prays

THE annual Norwich Spastic Service at Norwich Reformed Church was attended by the Lord Mayor of Norwich, Mr Ralph Roe, and the Lady Mayoress. A collection for the Norwich and Norfolk Spastic Association raised £36.

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SN Sep13

Society's new idea for second hand goods

FROM the outside, 16 Bridge Road East, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, is a plain single-storey white building covering some 13,000 sq ft. Inside in the words of John Tough, the Society's Head of Marketing: 'Every day is like Christmas Day.'

For it is to this former laundry that all the goods, collected in the Society's name, are brought for sorting. Every day lorries loaded with collection sacks filled by housewives as far apart as the Midlands and East Anglia, arrive at this central depot: 'The Waste Reclamation Centre.'

John explained: 'This is a brand new venture which has grown out of the old Unwanted Household Items scheme whereby individual agents collected in our name. They would sort out the material and then resell it, giving us a share of the proceeds.'

Grading

'The Waste Reclamation Centre has two advantages. For a start it gives us greater control and secondly, because we have a team of our own sorters, we are able to grade very much more precisely.'

These days waste reclamation is big business bearing out the old proverb 'Where there's muck there's money.' At one end of the scale there is the bric-a-brac so valuable in some instances that valuers at Sotheby's are called in to give an estimation. At the other end, there are 'low rags,' such as old knickers, which will eventually go for transformation into roofing felt.

'For a start we wanted to ensure the quality of second-hand goods being sold to our shops and there is a network of over 100 spread throughout the country. We are quite ruthless about what is selected and only the best of second-hand clothing is packed off to the shops where the managers will price it. It is quite



YOU do not become an expert rag sorter overnight—Jim Mercer's father and grandfather were in the trade. His eyes and experience mean that a pile of cloth can be profitably sorted into some 60 grades at the Waste Reclamation Centre.



THE Spastics Society's Head of Marketing, John Tough, with some of the treasures that come in. The vellum document he holds bears the signature of one Robert Tichborne, and Sotheby's say that if it concerns the family involved with 'The Tichborne Claimant' case then its value is increased.

'Waste not want not' and jumble reaps golden profit

feasible that a housewife at one end of the country will donate a really good article of clothing and then, holidaying far away, find the same item for sale in the local Spastics Shop,' John said.

The sacks are emptied on to a conveyor belt at one end of the building for the first sort-out under the eye of supervisor Dot Brooks. 'I saw the job advertised and as I've always loved jumble sales I applied. It's very exciting—you never know what you're going to find.' And there have been some real finds. A clock cased in tortoiseshell and what initially looked like a piece of dirty old paper.

'It turned up the other week and at first we thought it must be an old will because of the red sealing wax,' said Dot. The document, as they discovered, had been sealed over 250 years earlier: May 28, 1716. In elegant, elaborate almost to the point of being indecipherable, script, the document is an assignment of land by one

Robert Tichbourne, inscribed on vellum.

In the pocket of an old coat was found a love letter written by a six-year-old to his 'True Love,' and there was an old man's mementoes. 'It made us rather sad sorting out that lot. There were his medals and old photographs and letters all just bundled up to be got rid of after he'd died,' said Dot. 'We've even had a complete barrister's outfit. But with the rest of the clothing, sheer commonsense tells you what to keep and what to discard. You look at it whatever it is, whether it's baby clothes, a coat or bedspread, and just think, "Now would I buy this?"' she explained.

In fact only about one in 10 such items pass Dot and her colleagues' rigorous

standards. Shoes are even less likely to be of use for reselling: possibly only one in 20 pairs. The discards then come under the eye of the only experienced rag sorter, Jim Mercer, who acquired his expertise through his father and grandfather, who were both dealers.

The most valuable rags—and there are some 60 grades, are the knitted woollens. He sorts these into nearly 30 different colours. This material is then sold at auction to manufacturers for processing

back into yarn for re-spinning and dyeing.

The next grade is wipers—ranging from white to dark. These are rags which have a very high absorbency level. Wiper manufacturers buy this raw material and process it for wipers for industry. British Leyland alone buy many tons a week. After wool and cotton come the man-made fibres which again are sorted into colours for eventual re-processing.

It is this meticulous sorting which makes the scheme

a money spinner because buyers know that what they are purchasing is exactly what they want. Apart from rags and bric-a-brac there is scrap like old car batteries which also has considerable value.

The rags for industry are squeezed into manageable ½ ton proportions by an Italian baling machine which, like everything else on the premises, was bought secondhand through the auspices of Stuart Sharer who describes himself as a 'Consultant in Waste Reclamation.' In fact—apart from the whole scheme being the first the Society has undertaken, there is absolutely nothing new at 16 Bridge Road East—Secondhand Rose would feel completely at home, it is the ultimate in jumble sales.



SUPERVISOR Dot Brooks, at the first stage of the operation—emptying the sacks that can contain anything from a priceless curio to rags fit only for roofing felt.



JUNE Waddington, Dot Brooks and Sheila Sethner take their teabreak in a canteen furnished from an auction. Sorting is dry and dusty work and they are on their feet all day.

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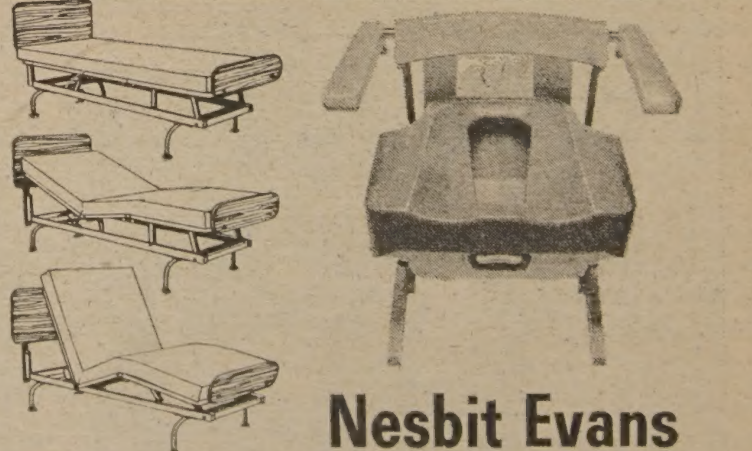
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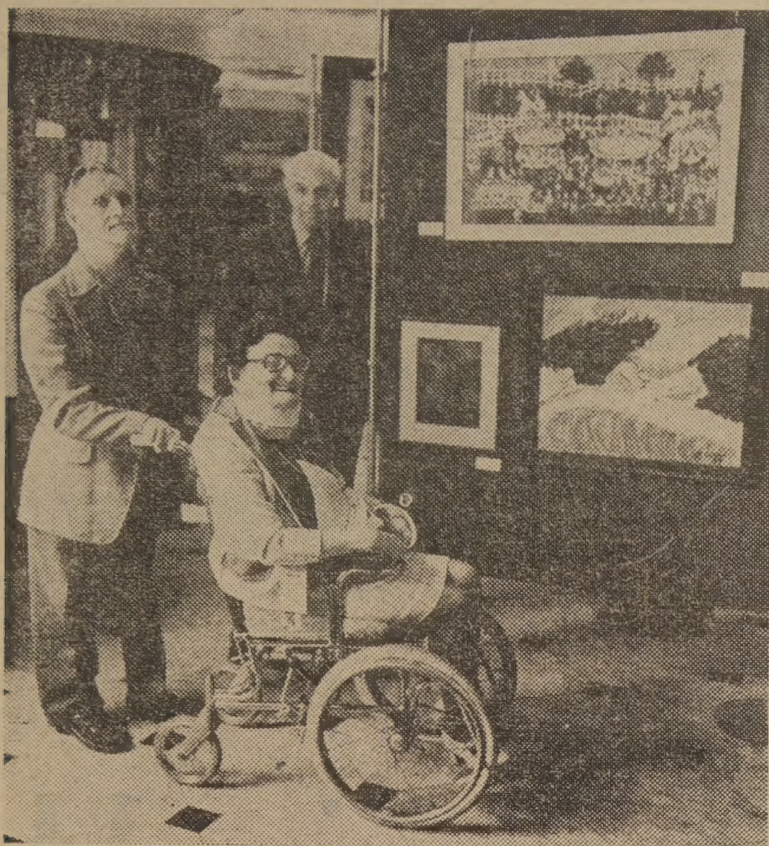
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Artistic success at the Royal Academy

THE Spastics Society's art show by disabled artists in the entrance hall of the Royal Academy proved such a success that it is hoped to mount another next year.

Visitors to the Academy's Summer Exhibition visited the Society's first, and a dozen of the 45 entries were sold.

Two were bought by the Society as the start of the Society's own Art Collection. They were 'Four Seasons' by John Losano and 'River Landing' by Martin Lane.

Said exhibition secretary Yola Wyn-Richards: 'Some visitors were commenting that the standard was so high that

the pictures were better than some of those displayed elsewhere in the Academy!'

In addition to John Losano and Martin Lane, the other exhibitors were: Michael Thompson, untitled drawings (two), Nellie de Beaufort Saunders, 'Wild Roses and Grasses,' Ann Burton, 'Abstract,' David Blow 'The Northern Star,' Pat Cursons, 'Boats,' Irena Kaiser, 'Landscape,' Lesley Weeks 'Flowers' and 'Landscape,' Joan Dalton, 'Piper,' David Platt 'Swiss Cable Car,' Maureen Kelsey, 'Old Thatch,' Robert Ferguson Ismay, 'St Fillans Loch Earn,' Maud Bullen, 'The Fair' and 'The Park,' Peter Scrocroft, 'St Michael's,' Eirlys Clement, 'Hills in Autumn,' J. Loggie Wood, 'Kilnsey Crag,'

Steve Machon, 'Spitfire in

Flight,' Doreen Wood, 'Breezy Sand Dunes,' Malcolm Gorst, 'St Andrews' and 'Loose,' Ivy Brooks, 'Railway Cottage,' Clive Bailey, 'Good Grief,' John Kirkham, 'The Mountain Pass,' Ron Dowsett, 'Girl in the Park,' Doug Lavender, 'The Black Forest,' Joan Chandler, 'Alone in Thought,' Dzintra Zveja Ridley, 'The China Garden Restaurant at Plymouth' and 'Preparing a berth for the Kathleen and May,' Yvonne Cooper, 'Dustbins,' Suzanne Jamieson, 'Long Lazy Summer,' Chloe Westrop-Bernard, 'Untitled Landscape,' Francis O'Neill, 'Mediterranean Scene,' Nicholas Chandler, 'Ship,' John Bishop, 'Cottage,' Ranjit Singh Bhrama, 'Passing Train,' Barbara Biggs, 'Mon Dieu,' Valentina Clay, 'Roscoff Ferry,' Gareth Cole, 'Still Life,' 'Por-

trait' and 'Lady and a Fruit Bowl,' and Valerie Cooper, 'Two Friends.'

ARTISTS at the Academy. Picture above left: Loggie and Doreen Wood made the journey from their Colchester home to see their pictures and had the added bonus of meeting one of the judges, Edward Bawden, CBE, RA, who selected their work for hanging. Centre: Joan Dalton, of the Society's Princess Marina Centre in Buckinghamshire, with her picture entitled 'Piper.' Above: David Blow, another exhibitor from the Princess Marina Centre, was proud to see his work on display.

Who cares in the EEC?

Continued from Page 1

If hiding the cerebral palsied and other disabilities out of sight has been hitherto a fault of the Irish, then Italy has further yet to go to rid itself of its own outdated approach. Fragmented both politically and industrially, the country suffers from a lack of co-ordination in many areas of its social services. There are, of course, isolated pockets of dedicated workers attending to their 'patch,' and forced to look inwards since the government is in no position to help spread a general policy of proper concern. It's somewhat a case of 'lucky for some,' depending upon the area in which they live. Heavy reliance on private insurance schemes, run by industrial giants like Fiat, means that the disabled tend in general to be better off in the rich, productive regions: provided a member of their family is, or was, an employee at such a firm.

So, with comparatively meagre State provision, to be disabled for those tucked away in the depths of the country, in outback territory like Sardinia, or in many of the ancient cities such as Rome or Florence (where, for instance, little or no account is taken of access), is nothing to celebrate. I have heard sad reports from visitors to the capital, bewildered that even there, a 19th century religious-cultural attitude persists in which disablement is too often viewed with a mixture of superstitious fear and passive resignation.

If a young woman in a wheelchair gets married, it is considered 'not quite nice.' If a handicapped couple decide they want to become husband and wife, the able-bodied are appalled. A spastic child,

encouraged to try to walk along a quiet street, will soon find the pavement made clear—by pedestrians crossing to the other side of the road to avoid any confrontation, or personal embarrassment.

At the special centre in Rome's Via Ramazzini, the spastic children of poor families sit or lie in regimented rows, watching a lot of television and offered a sparse education compared with the impressive output in some other EEC countries. One day this spring, however, a joint team from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Transport did make a point of investigating in Rome a single-decker converted London bus, carrying a British group of wheelchair Open University students round the city. Armed with tape measures, slide rules, cameras and notebooks, the Italian party

seemed very excited at the thought of copying the conversion idea to transport some of their non-ambulant children.

That it took visiting Britains, bent on exploring the Sistine Chapel as part of their degree course, to inspire the Italian Government to think in terms of mobility for a few of their immobile is a pleasant quirk of fate.

That the incident in itself (so many officials, so much lengthy discussion and note-taking) merely represented looking at a simple modification of an old bus, is a more serious pointer, perhaps, to illustrate the slowness of pace with which Italy's politicians move.

Next issue: Our investigation continues with the position of the disabled in West Germany, France, Belgium and Luxembourg; more about Italy and a return to the UK.

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Welcome for the Duchess

HRH The Duchess of Kent, Patron of The Spastics Society, is certain of an enthusiastic welcome when she arrives at the Society's AGM. Her visits to Society functions have been notable for her warm spontaneity and sincere interest in the cause of the handicapped.

The picture, right, shows the Duchess of Kent with Mr Dorrien Belson, Chairman of the Society.



Society's AGM for Silver Jubilee Year

THE 25th Annual General Meeting of The Spastics Society on October 15 marks the Silver Jubilee milestone in the Society's history and delegates can look back on a quarter of a century of pioneering progress. And in spite of current problems caused by inflation and the spiralling cost of providing services, there is no doubt that a spirit of confident enthusiasm for the future will be the keynote of the meeting, to be held at the Royal College of Surgeons, London.

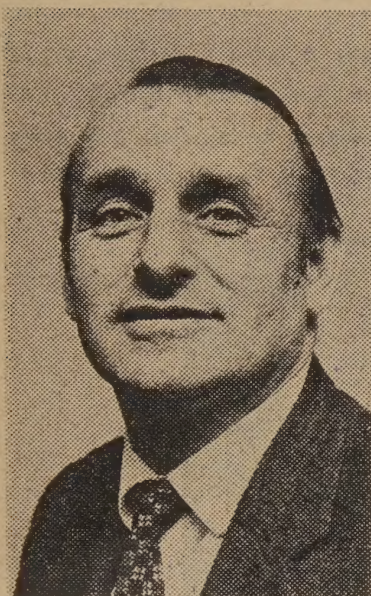
The AGM will be attended by the Society's Patron, HRH The Duchess of Kent, and the speakers will be Lord Goodman, chairman of the independent committee of inquiry on charity law and voluntary organisations which reported at the end of 1976, and Mr Alex Moira, a vice-chairman of the Society, and one of its four founder members.

One of the most important duties of delegates to the AGM is the voting for seats on the Society's Executive Council. Five members of the 15-strong Council retire by rotation each year, and it is a significant sign of the Society's vigour that nine candidates have been nominated for election this year. As in previous years, Spastics News prints photographs and brief details about each candidate so that local voluntary groups with voting powers can discuss the election before the AGM.

After the guest speakers, the reports from the Society's honorary officers as to the year's progress, plus forecasts for the future, and the election, the afternoon will be chiefly devoted to 'question and answer' sessions when delegates can quiz chairmen of committees and senior staff members on any aspect of the Society's work.

October 15 promises to be an interesting and stimulating day.

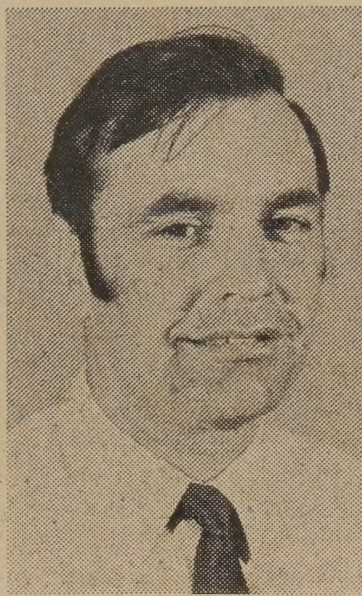
Nine seek seats on the Executive Council



Derek Ashcroft

* MR Derek Ashcroft, a schoolmaster living in Brighton, has served on the

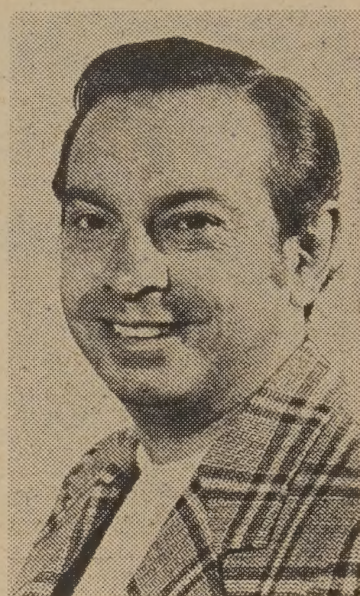
Executive Council for the last three years and is a member of the Society's Resources Committee. Father of a 19-year-old spastic son, he has been a member of the Brighton, Hove and District Spastics Society for 18 years, serving on its executive and appeals committee. Mr Ashcroft was deeply involved in the forming of his local group's parents' association and was its chairman for four years. He is vice-chairman of the South East Regional Co-ordinating Committee and represents that body and his own group on the management committee of the Garwood Hotel, Bognor Regis.



Hedley Chappell

* MR Hedley Chappell is a senior lecturer in biology and lives in Cosham, Ports-

mouth. He is the father of a spastic son, now aged 13, and his special interest is in the design and manufacture of aids for young spastics. He feels that his training in biology has been useful in enabling him to understand and appreciate something of the problems and treatment of cerebral palsy. For the last six years Mr Chappell has been a member of the executive committee of the Portsmouth and District Spastics Society, and is also the group's secretary. He is a member of The Spastics Society's Public Relations and Fund Raising Committee.



John Grenier

* MR John Grenier, a chartered accountant, of

The Barbican, London, has been on the Society's Executive Council since March 1972, having previously been a member of the Finance and Administration Committee, Appeals Advisory Group and Appeals Committee. Mr Grenier was the Society's Honorary Treasurer and Chairman of the Finance Committee between November 1973 and November 1976. Although himself not the parent of a spastic child, he first started working for spastics through his uncle Mr William Burn's involvement in the Society.

* MR William Burn was Chairman of The Spastics Society between 1966-73. A chartered accountant, he is the father of an adult spastic son and has close connections with the Croydon, Sutton and district group. Now living in Cirencester, Glos, Mr Burn joined the Executive Council in 1959 and was appointed honorary treasurer the following year, a position he held until he became Chairman. He was a member of the Stars Organisation for Spastics, a trustee of the Friends of Spastics League, plus other trusts connected with the Society, and is a former director and chairman of Spastics Shops Ltd. Mr Burn is a member of the



William Burn

Finance and Management Board, and is trustee of the Staff Pension Fund.

MRS Dorothy Cottle is the mother of a spastic daughter and lives at Dinas Powis, Cardiff. She has been on the executive committee of Cardiff and District spastics group for over 20 years, has been its chairman for eight years and was chairman of appeals for nine. Mrs Cottle was a member of Cardiff Community Health Council for two years and is a member of the 'shadow' health care team for the mentally handicapped. She is on the management committee of the Cardiff Spastics Day Care Centre.



Dorothy Cottle

MRS Eileen Milnes of Sale, Cheshire, is the parent of a spastic and Chairman of Friends of Rodney House Clinic for the cerebral palsied and mixed handicaps. She has served on the committees of Manchester and District Spastics Society, Rodney House, Sale and Altrincham Spastics Society, and now serves on the Greater Manchester Joint Advisory Council for cerebral palsy, and the working party on transport for the disabled in Greater Manchester.

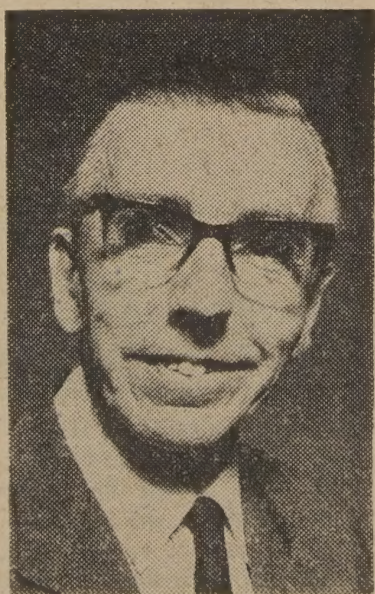


Eileen Milnes



Lawrence Clarke

MR Lawrence Clarke, of Hammersmith, London, is an environmental health officer. Although not the parent of a spastic, he has worked for the Inner London Spastics Society for 10 years, and has been the group's chairman for five years. Mr Clarke is a member of the Regional Co-ordinating Committee and also belongs to the Hammersmith Association for the Disabled, the Institute of Public Health and Hygiene, the Institute of Welfare Officers, and the Council of Social Services.



Peter Day

* Asterisk denotes retiring member of Executive Council.

MR Peter Day, of York, is the father of an adult spastic son, and is an executive member of the York and District spastics group. He was the group's chairman for 12 years. He serves on The Spastics Society's Resources Committee and is chairman of the North East Regional Co-ordinating Committee. In addition to working on behalf of spastics for more than a quarter of a century, Mr Day, a retired assistant accountant to York Minister, is a Parochial Church Council member, treasurer of the York Deanery Synod, and a Samaritan.



Clarrie Williams

* Mrs Clarrie Williams of Pontypool, Gwent, was first elected to the Executive Council in 1973. She is Chairman of the Mon-

mouthshire Spastics Society, which she founded, is trustee and member of the management committee of its local work centre, and member of the South Wales District Committee. In addition, Mrs Williams, who is the mother of a spastic son, is a member of the general purposes committee of Gwent Standing Conference of voluntary organisations, past committee member of the hospital league of friends, President of Torfaen PHAB Club, member of a Gwent Area Health Authority sub-committee, Wales Council for the Disabled sub-committee, and is a member of a special committee concerned with building a swimming pool for the disabled.

News about the Spastics Pool

Help for Meldreth

SPASTICS Pool supervisors in Cambridgeshire and parts of Hertfordshire are aiming to increase the support for Meldreth Manor School's annual fete on Saturday, September 17. Letters have been circulated to all collectors in the area reminding them of this opportunity to visit the school, which is the only one of its type in the country.

'There has always been a keen interest in Meldreth,' commented area supervisor Iris Mayes, 'but this year we want to make a special effort including the hire of coaches. We think it is vital that Spastics Pool collectors and members should see some of the work undertaken by The Spastics Society.'



EDDIE Chapleo, Warden of Wakes Hall residential centre in Essex, hands over the keys of a new British Leyland Mini to Mr A. Butcher, of East Mersea Road, West Mersea, Essex. Mr Butcher won his prize in a recent Charm Girl competition.



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SN Sep7

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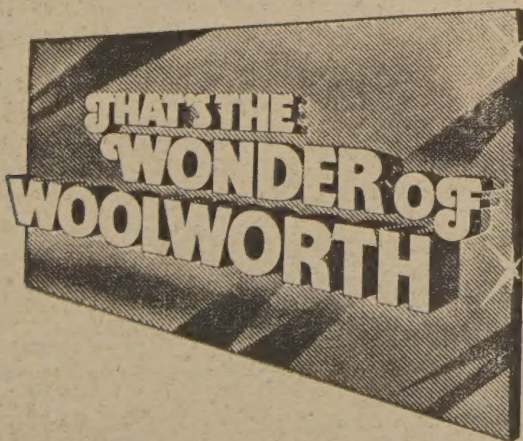
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SN Sep16

'You must branch out, says John

JOHN Hawkrige, the Leeds walker who has figured among the finalists at both the Society's annual Achievement and Literary Awards has undertaken what may well prove to have been his last walk.

'I went from Ilkley to Bowness on Windermere, basically a river walk but going over mountains and detouring to villages, so that by the time you've completed the 81 miles you've done nearer 100. This time it was so hard—by the fourth day I felt I'd reached the limit but I had to keep on. I had to go flat out till I virtually collapsed. The sun shone cloudlessly for the whole nine days and I was drinking eight pints of water a day to prevent

dehydration.'

One thing John won't stop is talking about walking.

He gives lectures to the parents of spastic children and says: 'Look when I was 18 I hadn't walked a mile. Now 10 years later my life's changed—because I made it change. It's no good just going to college and getting educated—it's unbalancing—too many physically handicapped people with average intelligence withdrawing. I think you've got to branch out and push yourself. I walk with sticks and after a while I get blisters and after a while those blisters just go numb. It's the mental application that keeps you going.' John says that parents hearing this, realise that they must not over-protect their children. 'Their children can make a go of things for themselves,' he declares.

—and Terry agrees



TERRY Rivers, a spastic Scout, pictured at the start of a hiking holiday in the land of the Vikings. Terry, 14 will take part in as many of the expeditions planned from the camp they set up in Esberg, Denmark, as he can in a wheelchair. His home is in Slough, Bucks.

Picture by the Slough Evening Mail.

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SN Sep12

RONALD Peckham, of Vaisey Road, Stratton, Cirencester, and Peter Edwards, of Birchwood Road, Stratton St Margaret, Swindon, have two things in common. They are both employed by British Leyland, Swindon, and are both members of the Spastics Pool.

They also quite independently entered a competition and each won a British Leyland 1000 cc Mini.

The presentation of the cars was made by Mr John Isley, Plant Director at British Leyland, at the White Hart Hotel, Fairford, Gloucestershire, in August.



A 77-YEAR-OLD Honic-knowledge widow, Mrs Gladys Lee, was in the spotlight recently when she was presented with a cheque for £599.11 by Westward Television personality, Laurie Quayle. Mrs Lee won a second dividend share of the Spastics Pool



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SN Sep14

Their holiday playgroup involves the community

IN THE early 1970's a group of mothers in the newly formed Spalding and District Spastics Society began holding regular get-togethers in a small church hall in the town.

These brief meetings proved invaluable for the mothers, who were able to swap views on caring for their demanding offspring, and for the children, who could play together.

But they also have a greater importance in the life of the Society, the chat sessions spawned an idea which has made the summer holidays a happy time for the handicapped children of the district.

The idea was the formation of a summer playgroup to relieve mothers and keep the children in contact with each other during the long holidays.

The organisers asked the local Mencap Society to come along and help and the August playgroup was off the ground, albeit with small beginnings.

To start with it was held only on one morning a week, but this brought grumbles from mothers. They complained that no sooner had their children gone off to the playgroup than it was time for them to return home.

Last summer for the first time the group — which is held at a school for the mentally handicapped in Spalding — ran for a full day each week throughout the month of August.

It has been run by a committee since last year. Apart from the relatives of both mentally and physically handicapped children, there are also two young schoolteachers on the committee.

One of the women in the group, joint secretary of Spalding Spastics Society and mother of a spastic daughter, Mrs Norah Plummer explains the thinking behind the scheme: 'It gives the parents a rest



and stimulates the children. They are away from school for seven weeks in the summer and can forget much of what they have learned.'

The greatest strength of the playgroup is that it has turned into such a huge community effort. All four secondary schools in Spalding provide helpers to look after, and play with, the children.

Transport has been provided by Lincolnshire Social Services with back up from volunteers, and Rotary and Lions Club members have acted as drivers.

The most important ingredients in the scheme are the children themselves, who range in age from five-years-old to teenage and come from a wide rural area as well as Spalding.

Children with every type of handicap are accepted. On one Tuesday this August the young helpers were looking after children like Mary, who is mentally handicapped and very strong and determined, Jimmy, who is maladjusted and often aggressive and Erica, Mrs Plummer's lively daughter, who is usually busy

looking after everyone else.

The group runs most smoothly on fine days when the children are allowed the relative freedom of the school's extensive play area.

This includes a sandpit, which is most popular, a roundabout, rocking horse, playhouse and several pieces of climbing equipment including a gnarled tree.

Wet days can be rather more trying on the nerves, with the group confined to the school hall. The organisers keep a bag full of books and crayons at the ready just in case of rain.

Another difficult time is feeding lunch to between 20 and 25 children, a large number of whom need help when eating. The children bring along packed lunches and the group provides squash and hot drinks.

The success of the venture can be gauged from the happiness it brings to the youngsters and the fulfillment it gives the helpers and organisers.

The feeling of the children is summed up by a special pupil at the playgroup, 23-year-old Richard, who is severely spastic. Towards the end of each playgroup Tuesday Richard begins sadly repeating 'seven days'—the eternity of time before he can return to the group.

The helpers' views are expressed by another Richard, a pupil at a local school, who wrote the following after his spell with last year's group.

'Just before the holidays started I was asked at my youth club if I would go to help handicapped people. My thoughts at the start were that I would not be able to cope and I was scared of something unfamiliar.

'I have always been a sociable person and like the company of others, but am one who never gets too involved in other people's problems.

'That night as I lay in bed partly asleep and partly awake, I thought of those handicapped people needing help. The next morning I decided to try it, but did not start immediately because I was still a bit worried of the unknown and what might happen.

'I found, however, it was a change from the usual routine. The holidays quickly passed and I was sad it had to end—yet I felt satisfied in that I had done something worthwhile.

'Before I began helping I expected those people to be very different from myself but it turned out, of course, that their disabilities were not so obvious as I thought.

'It was a lasting experience to meet people who value the simple things in life that we so often take for granted.'

VOLUNTEER helpers and children enjoy themselves in the sandpit at the holiday playgroup organised by the Spalding and District Spastics Society—a splendid idea which many other local groups should copy.

DIAL for advice from 'phone service

NOTTINGHAM is the latest link in what is hoped to be countrywide chain of the Disablement Information Advice Line — DIAL — whereby anybody can obtain specialised knowledge in answer to their queries. The concept started in Manchester, is flourishing in Alfreton, Derbyshire, and it is hoped that Nottingham's office will open in November.

DIAL is a voluntary organisation, and one of its special strengths is that in nearly all cases, the helpers are themselves disabled in some way. This can be a significant factor in helping the newly handicapped to come to terms with their disabilities.

Nottingham DIAL's secretary, Mrs Audrey Barks, says: 'In five months we have grown from a band of four to 28 — local societies like the Nottingham and District Friends of Spastics Group, have gone out of their way to give us

every kind of help and information.

'At the moment we are hoping the social services department or the county council will help us with an office that is accessible by wheelchair. The Samaritans very kindly offered us their old one free when they moved to new premises but it was totally impracticable from a wheelchair user's point of view. The Salvation Army have also offered us a room in their new day centre which has every kind of facility including a canteen.'

Until Nottingham DIAL get their office they cannot get their phone number and get down to business — officially. 'Actually, we have found ourselves helping out with information here and there already — even though we've no office and our only publicity has just been by word-of-mouth,' said Mrs Barks.

No spooks — but solid cash

THE Jacobean mansion at Guiseley, Yorks, during term time resounds to the activity of 28 schoolchildren for it is a Spastics Society school. However, Hawksworth Hall took on a new and eerie role when it was the scene of a night-watch by Yorkshire 18-Plus Group.

Every nerve was stretched through the vigil by 33 determined ghost hunters. Though doors and windows banged, floors and staircases creaked, not a single 'grey lady,' 'black monk,' 'white nun' or colourless body without a head, hove into view.

But this first-ever sponsored ghost hunt did produce something concrete—£200 plus for the Society's North-east Region funds.

New aids for disabled anglers

KEN Reader, left, of the Disabled Anglers Club of Ealing and John Reeves, assistant fisheries inspector with Thames Water Authority, on one of the concrete swims on the relief channel at Fishers Green, near Waltham Abbey, specially constructed for the permanent use of disabled anglers.

Ken was taking part in a fishing match organised by the Authority for the National Anglers Council. The match was designed to draw attention to the fact that disabled anglers can take part in angling contests where suitable facilities are provided.



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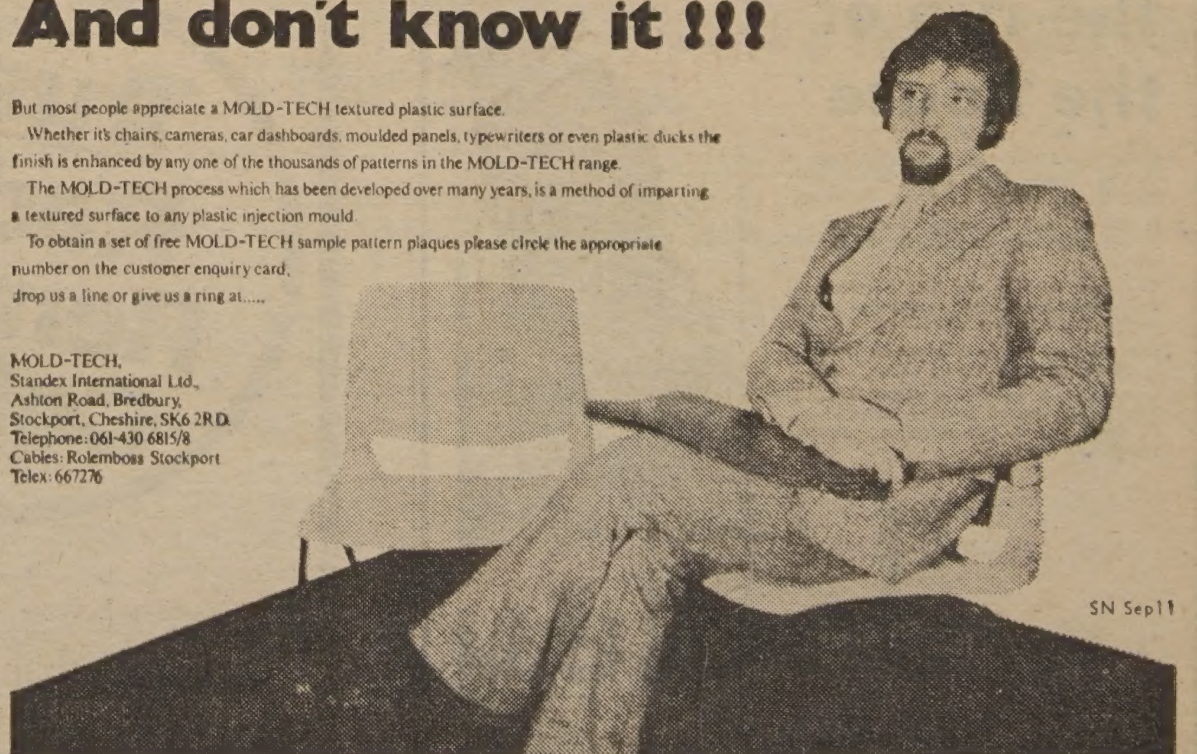
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SN Sep11

Out of the ward into the sunshine

—and patients are camp's happiest holiday makers

THE little Oyster Holiday Centre at Minster on the Isle of Sheppey, Kent, differs from its neighbouring holiday camps in the summer. For the Little Oyster, perched on a low cliff and looking out towards Southend, devotes its summer season to holiday weeks for the handicapped.

Mrs Lilian Partington, the manageress, has been at the Centre for 12 years, and of a recent party from St Lawrence's Hospital, Caterham, Surrey, she said: 'We don't know until they arrive just what their disabilities are going to be and it is unusual to have such a large group of spastics all at once. But I can honestly say that in the dozen years I've been here, I've never known a group enjoy themselves so

much. They've joined in everything — particularly the evening entertainments.'

The Little Oyster can take over 160 holiday-makers, and a purpose-built extension in 1974 creates an atmosphere as unlike that of an institution as it is possible to achieve. The Centre belongs to a Tunbridge Wells businessman, Mr T. T. Goodwin, one of whose three sons is handicapped.

Free life

There are no rules and regulations although guests are expected to be on time for meals and the attractions are identical to those offered by any holiday camp, with a bar in the adjoining hotel which is part of the Centre.

It opens a whole new world for some of the guests. Said Mrs Partington: 'Muriel, who is 28, has never been out of hospital before and she's one of those who is enjoying it most.'

A lot of time is spent outside and when the weather is fine an eye is kept on those likely to suffer sunburn—for the patio is an excellent vantage point just to sit and watch

the busy passage of river traffic.

Guests quickly become fascinated with the variety of craft from luxury passenger liners to humble cargo carriers, making their way up and down from the Port of London. If the sun is warm enough they also have the opportunity to bathe in the sea. Coach outings are laid on and they are not just confined to Kent—because of the accessibility of the coastal ports—excursions are arranged to Calais—to give the week's holiday a flavour of going 'abroad.'

Mutual help

Mrs Partington has noticed that when a number of holiday makers suffer from a variety of different disabilities—they quite naturally start giving each other a helping hand. So those with mental disabilities voluntarily help the physically handicapped with problems of getting about, offering to push wheelchairs and so on.

The holiday week finishes up with a Gala evening on

the Friday night in which everyone makes or has a fancy dress costume and there is a special menu.

Said Mrs Partington: 'When you see the enjoyment our guests derive it's so great I would never ever want to run an ordinary holiday camp. My family has almost been brought up here—my son-in-law was the camp entertainer for eight years, none of my children have ever had to adapt to the idea of handicapped people—they just accept them as people, which is, of course, the way it should be.'

The St Lawrence's group was the biggest to leave the hospital—the whole of one ward, 39 in all, came as a unit under the care of Sister Maura Reilly and Charge Nurse Cormack Nolan. 'They certainly enjoy the change—the food is different and there is a lot to do.' The party all brought enough money to take back presents ranging from watches to cameras.

Picnics are a favourite pastime—weather permitting—the Centre has a large green area stretching from the main hall patio to the cliffs which lead down on to the beach.

A WALK along the cliffs in the bracing sea air for a group of old friends from St Lawrence's with the new friends they have made at the holiday camp, propelling the chairs.



DYLAN with his grandmother, Mrs Lilian Partington, and Sister Maura Reilly. Mrs Partington has been at the Little Oyster for 12 years and Sister Reilly cannot remember the first time she brought a group from St Lawrence's. However, Mrs Partington is convinced that she has never seen a group to equal those in Sister Reilly's charge for enjoying a holiday.



LILY, Carol and Janet enjoy making a choice of gifts from the well stocked shelves of the holiday centre's shop, served with a smile by Melanie Harris.



A DAY in a week at the Little Oyster Holiday Centre where even if the sun does not shine there are always the ships that pass up Channel to watch—a change from the routine of hospital life.

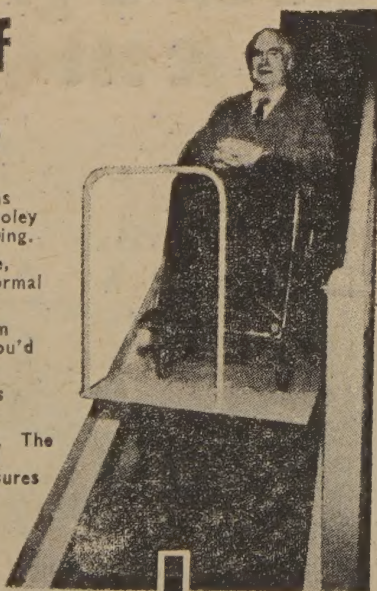
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SN Sep21



WINDOW ON WALES

by Emlyn Davies

Don't be afraid of Scouting

THE 1977 International Scouts' Jamboree was held this year at Llanover in the county of Gwent. Over 7,000 scouts of all ages attended from 17 countries and one day was given over solely to Extension Scouting, that is scouting for disabled people.

The number of disabled people who came forward was disappointing, especially in view of the great amount of hard work that had been put in to ensure that everything was ready to receive a large number of them.

It may well be that disabled people feel that because of their degree of disability they are unable to become involved in Scouting. I can

assure you that this is very far from the truth.

If you are disabled or your son or daughter is disabled, I would suggest that in the first instance you approach your local Scoutmaster to see if an Extension Scout or Guide group exists in your area and if not, contact the Wales Regional Office which will be able to give you more details.

His 'mite'

THE Biblical story of the 'widow's mite' is well known but the story of the 'little boy's mite' is, perhaps, not so well known.

It happened in Pontypridd during the flag day when Mrs Mori, who has been an Executive Committee member and member of the Regional Organisation of The Spastics Society, was selling flags.

A little boy passed, stopped, came back, went through all his pockets and produced a 3p and gave it to Mrs Mori with the words 'I'm sorry I haven't any more.'

The British are the most charitable people on earth and it is indeed heart-warming that charity begins so young in some people.

Peter is remembered

READERS of this column will remember my report last year of the tragic death of young Peter Scowcroft of Swansea. But Peter will be remembered in a most unique way.

An oil painting which he completed shortly before his death, entitled 'St Michael's'—a landscape with a church in the background—so impressed the judges of the exhibition of paintings by handicapped people at the Royal Academy that it was included in the 'special request' made by the judges that instead of 25 paintings, 45 paintings should be hung.

Another successful artist was Heidi Clements, also of Swansea, who painted 'Autumn Hills,' a small picture in oils, again to a standard high enough for it to be chosen for inspection at the Royal Academy.

This is an outstanding feat for anyone and we would like to congratulate most warmly Heidi and Peter's mother for allowing the picture to be exhibited.

Both pictures are now back in Swansea and available for showing at the Swansea and District Spastics Association's 'Longfields' Centre.

They seize cash chances

HOW about raising £175 in two hours?

That was the record fund-raising success of the Goytre and District branch of the Monmouthshire and District Spastics Society when members held a stall at Abergavenny Market.

Inspired by this success they then took the whole exhibition stall to the Abergavenny and County Show. Unfortunately the figures for this event are not yet available but will be reported in the next issue.

Not to be outdone, the Newport Support Committee carried out a house-to-house collection, backed up by a charity shop open for a week.

The grand total was £890, and expenses only amounted to £16.50 for materials.

This Support Group has handed over £1,400 to the Monmouthshire Spastics Society since April this year—a tremendous achievement.

A degree of success, but his struggle goes on

DIANNE BOYLE, of The Journal, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Northumberland, reported 'a student's tale' in her paper and called it: 'A degree of courage...'

For Wamidh Thweeny the graduation ceremony at Newcastle University was more than just an academic success. It was his final triumph over doctors and social workers who said Wamidh, a spastic, was so severely disabled he could never do more than read a morning newspaper and handle his own pocket money.

'That's the only education I had up to the age of 20 when I was in a hospital where 80 per cent of the patients were mentally defective or geriatric,' said Wamidh.

But I hated that place and decided I must fight to get out before I vegetated. I didn't know how I was going to do it but I knew I just had to find somewhere where I could be educated,' he explained.

His chance came when, three years after he was admitted to Darlington Hospital, Durham, it was arranged for Wamidh to have intelligence tests. It was the first time he had been tested intellectually since the time he first arrived in Britain from Iraq at the age of seven,



WAMIDH Thweeny, who was once told he could never leave hospital, on the brink of a challenging academic career

Picture by The Journal, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

when he came for medical treatment.

'I had been in medical or spastics' institutions for all my life until those later tests.' Then in less than a year Wamidh's life was transformed.

In 1970, armed with British

citizenship, he was enrolled at the Society's Kelvedon Further Education Centre in Essex, and in four years, interrupted by spells in hospital, he notched up eight GCE O levels, four GCE A levels and passed examinations for Oxford University.

Wamidh is very bitter that Oxford eventually decided he could not take up his place because there were no adequate facilities for the disabled. But Newcastle University's politics department accepted him, and his progress has been nothing short of impressive.

Wamidh's final papers were dictated to members of staff. He typed his notes and essays on a POSSUM remote control electronic typewriter. It was bought for him after Wamidh, in desperation, wrote to BBC interviewer Nancy Wise explaining his predicament. She visited Wamidh and within 10 minutes of a broadcast on 'The World at One,' money flooded in ranging from cheques for £500 to two postage stamps from an old age pensioner. So the £500 Wamidh needed for a Possum was eventually quadrupled.

That was seven years ago at the start of his academic career—seven years of concentrated study.

'But,' said Wamidh, 'I've also had a very enjoyable time at the university. I have been to concerts, talks, plays and films and stayed up till the

early hours discussing topics with my fellow students.'

He described his knack of getting round both the university campus and Europe as 'push hiking.'

'I just ask someone to wheel me outside and then I pick up a student as he or she is walking by. I'm then taken as far as that student is going and wait for another to come and push me a bit further.'

'I've travelled all over Europe like that and have been as far as Scandinavia on my own.'

'My secret to enjoying life is to be independent. There are too many people who think the world owes them a living and who are not prepared to do anything about it for themselves.'

For Wamidh that fight for independence is far from over. From Newcastle University's politics department he hopes to win a research post at an American university—in Ohio or Connecticut.

His upper second honours degree is more than enough as far as qualifications are concerned, but he now has to convince the American authorities that his disabilities are not barriers.

'If I cannot get a visa I already have the promise of a research post at Aberdeen University.'

'But I still have a very hard fight on my hands to establish my independence and to build an academic career for myself!'

Enterprise

MRS Butler, who is an executive member of the Risca Committee, supporting the Cwmbran Work Centre, seized on a very good fund-raising idea during the visit of HM The Queen to the area.

Whilst they were waiting to see the Queen, she served tea to her neighbours and friends, and in a very short time had raised £20.

That's enterprise for you!

Holiday aid

ONCE again, the giant organisation — Butlin's — was the venue for a number of holidays for the disabled. There were two holiday weeks in Pwllheli and two in Minehead.

I have been told that the staff of both holiday camps are to be most highly commended for the enthusiastic help given to the disabled visitors. It is this sort of co-operation which makes a holiday worth-while and we are grateful to them all.

Goodbye... and Hallo

MR W. E. H. Noel, who has been collector for the Boxes and Dolls Department in the Cardiff area for the past eight years, left the Society at the end of July.

I am sure that all the site holders and the contacts that Mr Noel has made over the years will be sad at not seeing him again and will wish him a happy future. We welcome his successor, Mr R. N. Humphreys of Mountain Ash, and I am sure that all site holders will receive him in the same way as they did Mr Noel.



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A magic moment for Simon

THERE are few pursuits in rock climbing more frightening and exciting than abseiling, where, held securely by ropes, you step off a cliff top and launch yourself down to the bottom.

Simon Elston, a spastic aged 11, was able to experience the magic of it when he holidayed at the Society's Churchtown Farm Field Studies Centre at Lanlivery. With houseparent Simon Leader he was part of an expedition to Cheesewring Quarry on Bodmin Moor. And after climbing a 90ft cliff at the Quarry, came the moment when young Simon was able to step into space—before coming safely down to earth.

Picture by Joseph Charge.

Old soldier marches on

OLD soldiers never die—they just keep on the march. Chuck Martin is 61, but as a paratrooper during the second world war, marched many hundreds of miles and it is a habit he has never shed. He lives at Fencham, Essex, and spends much of his spare time rambling round the countryside in search of mushrooms. Now he has completed a 77-mile walk, pushing a wheelchair, to raise money for the Stars Organisation for Spastics residential centre at Wakes Hall—starting at the Tower of London and finishing at Aldham. He raised £60.

SPASTICS NEWS

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Record gift from London

THE London Regional Fund which represents the 18 local groups affiliated to The Spastics Society in London, has donated £32,000 towards the deficits incurred in the running of the Society's national centres in the Greater London area.

The centres, which include the Woodford Hostels to the north, Coombe Farm, Croydon, in the south, and Eastcote in the west, had a deficit of £79,000 for the year 1976-77.

Said Mr Michael Stopford, Head of Centres: "This is the largest donation ever made towards running costs that I know of. In fact I believe it is the largest ever donation made by local groups to the parent body. It is a huge sum and quite fantastic of them to give it—especially as some of the groups already run their own local centres."

Something old, something new at the charity shop

CHARITY shops selling donated goods are now a well-established part of the British scene. But a charitable retail venture with a difference opened at Woking on Saturday, August 20, when The Spastics Society offered new goods for the home in a special first floor department of its shop at 20 Chertsey Road.

The brightly decorated new sales floor, called 'Home Affairs,' is stocked with the latest new lines from top British manufacturers including pottery, glassware, kitchenware, basketware, tablecloths, tea cloths, wooden salad bowls and pepper mills, etc. It will also feature some outstanding examples of pine and ash furniture.

On sale, too, will be hand-made studio pottery, and novel chalet moneyboxes, manufactured by handicapped workers.

All profits from sales will be used to help handicapped people.

Prices, promises Mr Lance

Topham, the Society's Merchandising Manager, will be 'very keen indeed.' He explains: 'We are able to keep prices to a minimum through bulk buying. The Society now runs over 100 Spastics Shops, and we buy in quantity selected new items for many of them.'

However, Woking is only the second place where we have devoted a complete section to entirely new goods, so we are hoping for full public support.'

The ground floor at No 20 Chertsey Road will continue to sell donated goods including clothing and bric-a-brac.

Another reward for his devotion

PAT Ratcliffe, of Worcester Park, Surrey, a victim of multiple sclerosis since her early twenties, works from her wheelchair, keeping up a running dialogue with 26 other disabled people. She does it by tape, and among her correspondents is Ernie Roberts, 49, of St Lawrence's Hospital, Surrey.

Ernie is a past holder of The Spastics Society's Achievement Award for his devotion to his fellow spastic patient and great friend, Joey Deacon.

One of his tapes, telling her how he had helped in the production of Joey Deacon's autobiography 'Tongue Tied' so impressed Pat, she passed it on to the Muriel Braddick Foundation which makes an annual award for the best tape made by a disabled person. This year the prize went to Ernie.

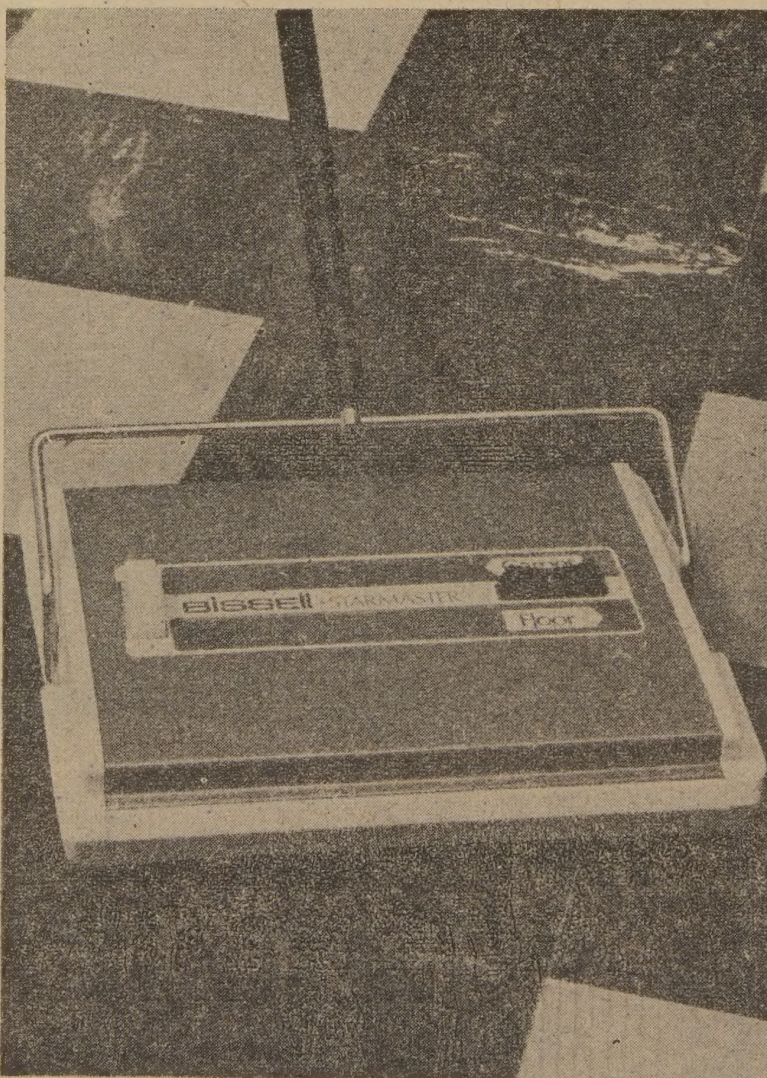


Ernie Roberts

The prize of a carved wooden cormorant was presented to Ernie by Pat herself. Mrs Ratcliffe said: 'The tape brings in Joey's voice which no one but Ernie can understand and the voice of Tom and Michael who were also involved in the book.'

The award-winning BBC TV Horizon film, entitled 'Joey', which tells the story of Joey's life, was shown again on August 23.

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